

The only Bevil breathing
OBSERVATIONS

ON

DR. JOHNSON'S

LIFE OF HAMMOND.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIX-PENCE.]

OBSEVATIONS



LIFE OF HAMMOND

By J. H. HAMMOND

OBSERVATIONS

ON

^K
DR. JOHNSON'S (P.)

LIFE OF HAMMOND.

Non satis est pulchra poemata, dulcia sunt.

HOR. DE ART. POET.

ΤΟ ΟΜΟΙΩΣ ΑΜΦΟΙΝ ΑΚΡΟΔΕΣΘΑΙ.

Τίλο δ' εἶναι οὐ μόνον τὸ μὴ προκαλεῖσθαι μῆδιν, οὐδὲ τὸ τῇ εὐνοίᾳ ἰσὴν ἀμφότεροις ἀποδοῦναι· ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ταξί, καὶ τὴν ἀπολογία, ὡς βιβουληται καὶ προηρηται τῶν ἀγωνιζομένων ἑκάστος οὕτως εἶσαι χρῆσασθαι.

Δημοσθ. περὶ Στιφ.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR W. BROWN, CORNER OF ESSEX-STREET, STRAND.

M DCC LXXXII.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

THE LIFE OF

JOHN MONRO



By JOHN MONRO, Esq.
of the Inner Temple, Barrister at Law.
LONDON:
Printed by J. JOHNSON, in Pall-mall.

1794.
PRINTED FOR W. BLOOM, CORNER OF FLEET STREET AND ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

TO dispute the sentiments and decisions of those whom mankind has flattered by a long continuance of favor and approbation, is generally considered as an act of temerity and presumption. Our literary, as well as our political opinions, are too often adopted without enquiry; and the tyrant in criticism frequently obtains as implicit an obedience as the civil despot. A desire of supporting the right of private judgement, and of defending an admired Poet from the obloquy which a learned Critic has

lately imposed upon him, is the motive for offering the following pages to the attention of the public.

The ELEGIES of HAMMOND have hitherto been allowed to express the passion of Love in the language of nature. The determination of Doctor Johnson, therefore, cannot be heard without surprise, when he declares, that they have neither passion, nature, nor manners; and the admirers of these poems must be ready to conclude, if his opinion be just, that there is no inconsiderable defect both in their feelings and their judgments.

It is remarkable that the learned writer should not have mentioned, (for it could not have escaped his extensive reading) that these Elegies are close imitations, and in many parts exact translations of some of the Elegies of Tibullus. But, perhaps, if he were determined to condemn him, he might be aware, that so near an alliance to the Roman poet would obviate the force of his severity, and destroy the acrimony of his censure.

Tibullus,

Tibullus, whose fame the admiration of ages has rendered sacred and inviolate, has confessedly described the passion of love in a manner superior to every other poet. But there is, perhaps, a period, beyond which the description of what we cease to feel, however delightfully represented, can no longer amuse; and it is even possible, when passion shall have totally subsided, we may forget there ever was a season when the charms of beauty were enchanting.

Where their merits, in other respects, are nearly equal, imitative is doubtless inferior to original composition; and the admirer of Hammond cannot but confess, that the lustre of his poetry would be diminished, were the rays which he has borrowed from Tibullus restored to their original source: It may, however, with justice be contended, that they suffer no diminution of splendour from the medium through which they pass.

To connect the spirit with the sentiments of an original, constitutes the chief excellence of a translation. By this union, Hammond certainly obtains a peculiar distinction. The silence of his biographer in this respect, has conferred upon him the highest praise. If he were *ignorant* of the Elegies being imitations, they must bear uncommon marks of originality to elude the penetration of so sagacious a critic; and if he were *apprized* of it, since his observations breathe nothing but censure, it is evident that an acknowledgement was not consistent with his plan.

I shall first examine the Ninth Elegy, from which Doctor Johnson has *impartially* selected a quotation. He is very severe upon Mr. Hammond's mode of courtship. A lover who threatens his mistress with dying, he says, furnishes her with a sufficient excuse for rejecting him.* Though many have

* The sentiments of Rousseau upon this subject are different from those of Doctor Johnson; and he, I believe, is generally acknowledged

have doubtless obtained the affections of the fair by milder and more gentle expedients ; and probably the Doctor has been one of the happy number ; yet should not humanity have prompted him to express some pity for those whom fate had driven to such desperate extremities ?

Haud ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.

VIRG. ÆN.

Touch'd with misfortunes I myself have known,
I view, with pity, woes so like my own.

The passage, quoted in the life of our Poet, shall be here transcribed ; and if it be proved that he is *a swain of little meaning*, Tibullus, from whom the stanzas are entirely borrowed, must appear in some degree insignificant.

Wilt

knowledge to have known something of the female heart. To this resolution of her lover—*Demain vous serez contente, & quoique vous en puissiez dire, j'aurai moins fait que de partir*—the charming Eloisa makes the following reply—*Insensé ! si mes jours te sont chers, crain d'attenter aux tiens.*

Wilt thou in tears thy lover's corse attend;
 With eyes averted light the solemn pyre,
 Till all around the doleful flames ascend,
 Then slowly sinking, by degrees expire?

To sooth the how'ring soul be thine the care,
 With plaintive cries to lead the mournful band;
 In fable weeds the golden vase to bear,
 And cull my ashes with thy trembling hand:

Panchaia's odours be their costly feast,
 And all the pride of Asia's fragrant year;
 Give them the treasures of the farthest East,
 And, what is still more precious, give thy tear.

I shall present the learned reader with the original passage, that he may observe the closeness of the imitation.

TIBULL. LIB. III. ELEG. 2.

Ergo quum tenuem fuero mutatus in umbram
 Candidaque ossa super nigra favilla tegit.
 Ante meum veniat longos incompta capillos,
 Et fleat ante meum mæsta Neæra rogam.

Præfatæ

Præfatæ ante meos manes, animamque precatæ,

Perfusæque pias ante liquore manus :

Pars quæ sola mei superabit corporis, ossa

Incinctæ nigrâ candida veste legant.

Post hæc carbasseis humorem tollere velis,

Atque in marmorea ponere sicca domo.

Illuc quas mittit pinguis Panchaia merces

Eoque Arabes, dives et Assyria,

Et nostri memores lacrimæ fundantur eodem.

I am aware of the objection, that, though the *solemn pyre*, the *Asiatick odours*, and the *silent urn*, were agreeable to Roman manners, they are inapplicable to, and consequently improper in, modern times. To solicit the affections of a milk-maid in Roman imagery, must certainly be fruitless; because she could neither comprehend nor feel its force. But to a woman of education, which we may readily

admit the mistress* of Hammond to have been, the ardour of true passion, though refracted through the medium of fiction, might not only be pleasing but delightful; because whatever flatters the understanding, seldom fails to make its way to the heart.

The learned biographer observes, *where there is fiction there is no passion; he that describes himself as a shepherd, and his Neæra or Delia as a shepherdess, and talks of goats and lambs, feels no passion.* But Tibullus has described himself as a shepherd, and his Neæra or Delia as a shepherdess, and has talked of goats and lambs; and yet who is bold enough to declare that Tibullus felt no passion?

But without resting his defence upon the example of Tibullus, his adoption of pastoral ideas may be defended upon another principle. To please

* She was descended from an ancient and respectable family in Lincolnshire, of the name of Dashwood.—A niece of this lady is lately married to that deservedly admired patriot, Major John Cartwright.

please the imagination with this species of imagery, seems, in some degree, natural to Englishmen.— Their passion for liberty and rural amusements, makes them in general prefer a country life, that they may upon their own domains enjoy themselves uncontrouled. As Hammond was a man of small fortune, might not the management of his own estate constitute part of his plan of future life? And though it is hardly probable, had his imaginary scheme of happiness been carried into execution, that he would yoke his oxen to the plough with his own hands, or

In gloomy forests tend his lonely flock :

Yet as these things would naturally require his superintendence and direction, it is by a very pardonable metonymy, surely, that he speaks of the various operations of husbandry as what he intended to have been performed by himself.

To defend the favourable opinion which I have presumed to entertain of these Elegies, it will be

C

necessary

necessary to produce a series of quotations from them. The stanzas preceeding those which Dr. Johnson has transcribed, shall be first considered.

E L E G Y IX.

HE who could first two gentle hearts unbind,
And rob a lover of his weeping fair,
Hard was the man, but harder in my mind,
The lover still, who died not of despair.

With mean disguise let others nature hide,
And mimic virtue with the paint of art,
I scorn the cheat of reason's foolish pride,
And boast the graceful weakness of my heart.

The more I think, the more I feel my pain,
And learn the more each heavenly charm to prize;
While fools, too light for passion, safe remain,
And dull sensation keeps the stupid wife.

Sad is my day, and sad my ling'ring night,
When wrapt in silent grief I weep alone ;
Delia is lost, and all my past delight
Is now the source of unavailing moan.

Where

Where is the wit that heighten'd beauty's charms?

Where is the face that fed my longing eyes?

Where is the shape that might have blest my arms?

Where all those hopes relentless fate denies?

Surely if passion and nature are to be found in any poetical composition, they will be allowed to have existence in these verses.—Yet this is the poet of whom, Dr. Johnson has declared, *not three stanzas deserve to be remembered.*

Whether the following beautiful lines are not exceeded in the imitation, let learning and candour determine.

TIBULL. LIB. III. ELEG. 2.

Qui primus caram juveni carumque puellæ

Eripuit juvenem ferreus ille fuit.

Durus et ille fuit, qui tantum ferre dolorem,

Vivere et erepta conjuge qui potuit.

Non ego firmus in hoc; non hæc patientia nostro

Ingenio; frangit fortia corda dolor.

Nec mihi vera loqui pudor est, vitæque fateri
Tot mala perpeſſæ tædia nata meæ.

I ſhall next tranſcribe the Thirteenth Elegy, and
place on the oppoſite page the paſſages in Tibullus
to which Hammond is indebted.

E L E G Y XIII.

I.

Let others boaſt their heaps of ſhining gold,
And view their fields with waving plenty crown'd;
Whom neighb'ring foes in conſtant terror hold,
And trumpets break their ſlumbers never found.

II.

While calmly poor I trifle life away,
Enjoy ſweet leiſure by my chearful fire,
No wanton hope my quiet ſhall betray,
But cheaply bleſt, I'll ſcorn each vain deſire.

III.

With timely care I'll ſow my little field,
And plant my orchard with its maſter's hand;
Nor bluſh to ſpread the hay, the hook to wield,
Or range my ſheaves along the ſunny land.

If

TIBULLUS, ELEG. I. LIB. I.

I.

Divitias alius fulvo sibi congerat auro,
Et teneat culti jugera multa soli :
Quem labor assiduus vicino terreat hoste,
Martia cui somnos classica pulsa fugent.

II.

Me mea paupertas vitæ traducat inertī,
Dum meus exiguo luceat igne focus :
Nec spes destituat, sed frugum semper acervos
Præbeat, et pleno pinguiâ musta lacu.

III.

Ipse feram teneras maturo tempore vites,
Rusticus et facili grandia poma manu :
Nec tamen interdum pudeat tenuisse bidentem,
Aut stimulo tardas increpuisse boves.

Nor

IV.

If late at dusk while carelessly I roam,
I meet a strolling kid, or bleating lamb,
Under my arm I'll bring the wand'rer home,
And not a little chide its thoughtless dam.

V.

What joy to hear the tempest howl in vain,
And clasp a fearful mistress to my breast?
Or lull'd to slumber by the beating rain,
Secure and happy sink at last to rest.

VI.

Or if the fun in flaming Leo ride,
By shady rivers indolently stray,
And with my Delia walking side by side,
Hear how they murmur as they glide away.

VII.

What joy to wind along the cool retreat,
To stop and gaze on Delia as I go?
To mingle sweet discourse with kisses sweet,
And teach my lovely scholar all I know?

Thus

IV.

Non agnamve sinu pigeat fætumve capellæ
Desertum oblitâ matre referre domum.

V.

Quam juvat immites ventos audire cubantem
Et dominam tenero continuisse sinu :
Aut, gelidas hibernus aquas cum fuderit Auster
Securum somnos imbre juvante sequi.

VI.

—canis æstivos ortus vitare sub umbrâ
Arboris ad rivos prætereuntis aquæ.

VIII.

Thus pleas'd at heart, and not with fancy's dream,
In silent happiness I rest unknown;
Content with what I am, not what I seem,
I live for Delia and myself alone.

IX.

Ah, foolish man, who thus of her possess'd,
Could float and wander with ambition's wind,
And if his outward trappings spoke him blest,
Not heed the sickness of his conscious mind.

X.

With her I scorn the idle breath of praise,
Nor trust to happiness that's not our own;
The smile of fortune might suspicion raise,
But here I know that I am lov'd alone.

XI.

Stanhope, in wisdom as in wit divine,
May rise and plead Britannia's glorious cause,
With steady rein his eager wit confine,
While manly sense the deep attention draws :

Let

XII.

Let Scamhope speak his lifting country's wrong,
My humble voice shall please one partial maid;
For her alone I pen my tender song,
Securely lying in his friendly shade.

XIII.

Stans, credere tibi quum posses habere,
Delia, quicquid tuae praedae fuit, arma sequi.
With nothing save the tiger's fruit content,
And for her husband's patron call the bell.

XIV.

Non ego laudari curo, mea Delia tecum:
Dummodo sis, quae se fignis, inierque vocer.
The favourite subject of her gentle reign,
By love alone distinguish'd from the rest.

XV.

For her I hope my eyes to the plough,
In gloomy forests and my lonely flock;
For her a goat-herd climb the mountain's brow,
And deep extended on the naked rock.

XII.

Let Stanhope speak his list'ning country's wrong,
 My humble voice shall please one partial maid;
 For her alone I pen my tender song,
 Securely sitting in his friendly shade.

XIII.

Stanhope shall come and grace his rural friend,
 Delia shall wonder at her noble guest;
 With blushing awe the riper fruit commend,
 And for her husband's patron cull the best.

XIV.

Hers be the care of all my little train,
 While I with tender indolence am blest;
 The favourite subject of her gentle reign,
 By love alone distinguish'd from the rest.

XV.

For her I'll yoke my oxen to the plough,
 In gloomy forests tend my lonely flock;
 For her, a goat-herd climb the mountain's brow,
 And sleep extended on the naked rock.

XIII.

Huc veniet Messala meus, cui dulcia poma
 Delia selectis detrahet arboribus.
 Et tantum venerata virum, hunc sedula curet:
 Huic paret, atque epulas ipsa ministra gerat.

LIB. I. EL. V. line 31.

XV.

Ipse boves, mea, sim tecum modo, Delia, possim
 Jungere, et in solo pascere monte pecus;
 Et te dum liceat teneris retinere lacertis,
 Mollis in incultâ sit mihi somnus humo.

XVI.

Ah, what avails to press the stately bed,
And far from her midst tasteless grandeur weep,
By marble fountains lay the pensive head,
And while they murmur strive in vain to sleep.

XVII.

Delia alone can please, and never tire,
Exceed the paint of thought in true delight,
With her, enjoyment wakens new desire,
And equal rapture glows thro' ev'ry night:

XVIII.

Beauty and worth alike in her contend,
To charm the fancy, and to fix the mind;
In her, my wife, my mistress, and my friend,
I taste the joys of sense and reason join'd.

XIX.

On her I'll gaze, when other loves are o'er,
And dying, press her with my clay-cold hand —
Thou weep'st already as I were no more,
Nor can that gentle heart the thought withstand.

Oh,

XVI.

Quid Tyrio recubare toro sine amore secundo
Prodest, cum fletu nox vigilanda venit?
Nam neque tum pluma, nec stragula picta soporem,
Nec sonitus placida ducere possit aqua.

XVII.

On quit the room, on quit the deathful bed,
Or thou wilt die, to tender is thy head,
Oh leave me, Delia, else thou see me dead,
Thine weeping friends will do thy mournful part.

XVIII.

Let them, extended on the decent bed,
Convey the corpse in melancholy state;
Thine, all the village, feared the tender way,
While piping winds our woe, how loud they wail.

XIX.

Te spectem, suprema mihi cum venerit hora,
Te teneam moriens, deficiente manu.
Flebis, et arfuro positum me Delia lecto;
Tristibus et lacrymis oscula mixta dabis.

XX.

Oh, when I die, my latest moments spare,
Nor let thy grief with sharper torments kill;
Wound not thy cheeks, nor hurt that flowing hair,
Tho' I am dead, my soul shall love thee still.

XXI.

Oh quit the room, oh quit the deathful bed,
Or thou wilt die, so tender is thy heart;
Oh leave me, Delia, e'er thou see me dead,
These weeping friends will do thy mournful part.

XXII.

Let them, extended on the decent bier,
Convey the corse in melancholy state;
Thro' all the village spread the tender tear,
While pitying maids our wond'rous loves relate.

The beauties in this elegy are so numerous and
apparent, that every reader must perceive them. To
feel them in their fullest extent, it is doubtless re-
quisite to be intimately conversant with love and
nature.

XX.

**Tu manes ne læde meos, sed parce solutis
Crinibus, et teneris, Delia, parce genis.**

nature. Yet there is no *frigid pedantry* to obscure the sentiments, or to cloud the apprehension of the poorest intellects. All is native simplicity, and unaffected feeling. When the imagination is thus enwrapped in extasy, and absorbed in delight, it cannot be necessary to dwell upon any single beauties as preferable to the rest. In justice, however, to the memory of our departed poet, I must observe, and I doubt not some readers will concur with me, that the nineteenth stanza is an improvement of Tibullus's idea. The pause at the conclusion of the second verse, and the delicate introduction of the present time instead of the future, have a most happy and delightful effect.

Hammond's poetical fame, however, rests not solely upon his merit as a translator or imitator: his original compositions, though few, are excellent. The Elegy to Mr. Grenville, short as it is, contains more genuine strokes of passion, nature, and manners, than are to be met with in many approved poems of considerable length. The chain of appo-
fite

fite antitheses with which it opens, has all the elegant conciseness of Pope.

Oh, form'd alike to serve us and to please,
 Polite with honesty, and learn'd with ease;
 With heart to act, with genius to retire;
 Open yet wise; tho' gentle, full of fire;
 With thee I scorn the low constraint of art,
 Nor fear to trust the follies of my heart.

The detail which he afterwards enters into of his particular situation and feelings, has something in it which surely cannot fail to awaken the sympathy of the most insensible.

Hear, then, from what my long despair arose,
 The faithful story of a lover's woes:
 When, in a sober, melancholy hour,
 Reduc'd by sickness under reason's power,
 I view'd my state, too little weigh'd before,
 And love himself could flatter me no more;
 My Delia's hopes I would no more deceive,
 But whom my passion hurt, thro' friendship leave;
 I chose the coldest words, my heart to hide,
 And cure her sex's weakness thro' its pride:

E

The

The prudence which I taught, I ill pursu'd,
 The charm my reason broke, my heart renew'd;
 Again submissive to her feet I came,
 And prov'd too well my passion by my shame;
 While she, secure in coldness or disdain,
 Forgot my love, or triumph'd in its pain;
 Began with higher views her thoughts to raise,
 And scorn'd the humble poet of her praise:
 She let each little lie o'er truth prevail,
 And strengthen'd by her faith each groundless tale;
 Believ'd the grossest arts that malice try'd,
Nor once in thought was on her lover's side.

If there is neither passion, nature, nor man-
 ners in these lines, where are we to look for
 them?

To solicit the attention of my readers to any
 more quotations, must now be unnecessary. The
 curiosity of those who are unacquainted with these
 Elegies, it is hoped, will be excited to peruse them.
 To those who have read them, I presume not to
 point out beauties, or to dictate to their feelings.
 The warmest object of my wishes is in some degree
 to rescue from oblivious censure the labours of a
 poet,

poet, to whom I am indebted for no small portion of intellectual delight; and I shall be amply recompensed, if, through my interposition, any single individual shall acknowledge a source of satisfaction, with which he was previously unacquainted.

The character of the Elegy, in Dr. Johnson's opinion, is gentleness and tenuity; and if it be confined to the subject of love, where plaintive tenderness should prevail, the definition is, perhaps, sufficiently comprehensive. Horace informs us, that the unequal measures of this species of composition were first employed on subjects of complaint; but afterwards were adopted to express the joys of conquest, and the fortunate intrigues of love.

Verfibus impariter junctis querimonia primum,

Post etiam inclusa est voti sententia compos;

Quis tamen exiguos elegos emiserit auctor,

Grammatici certant et adhuc sub judice lis est.

HOR. DE ARTE POET.

E 2

Though

Though the inventor of elegy is left undetermined in these verses, yet critics of later times have bestowed the wreath of originality on Alcmon of Laconia. Of this poet, the admiration of his own age, a few fragments only are preserved in the works of Athenæus, Hephæstion, Eustathius, and Plutarch. Love was the subject of his muse; which also inspired the elegiac compositions of Archilochus, whose fame is celebrated by the pens of Horace and Longinus. Solon, the Athenian legislator, thought this species of poetry not beneath his notice. Some of his elegies are still preserved. The subjects of them are, indeed, different from those of the writers above mentioned: they were written with a design of inspiring in the people, a passion for freedom, a fondness for virtue, and an obedience to the laws. And as the Athenians had their Solon, so had the Spartans their Tyrtæus, whose animating elegies were supposed to have had no inconsiderable share in the victory over the Messenians*.

Tyrtæusque

* Tyrtæus was by birth an Athenian; but on account of the signal services which he performed for the Lacedæmonians, they created him a citizen of Sparta.

Tyrtæusque mares animos in martia bella

Versibus exacuit.

HOR. DE ART. POET.

By these patterns, with respect to versification, were constructed the elegies of Ovid, Tibullus, and Propertius. The topics on which they exercised their respective abilities, are almost as various as the passions of the human mind. These, however, are justly considered as the models by which modern elegy is formed, improved, and perfected.—Hence it appears, that though love be the general subject on which the elegiac muse is employed, yet since this passion may be modified by a variety of others, the composition will naturally assume a tone from the peculiar influence of each. Thus the liberty which Horace allowed to comedy, may, perhaps, with due discrimination, be more extensively granted to elegy.

Interdum tamen et vocem comædia tollit,

Iratusque Chremes tumido delitigat ore.

HOR. DE ART. POET.

The

The Quatrain of ten syllables appears to be admirably well adapted to elegy. The gravity and equability of its movement are as expressive of the plaintive and tender effusions of passion, as they are capable of conveying ideas that are solemn and majestic. The admired elegies of the amiable Shenstone are written in this measure, and contribute in no small degree to demonstrate its propriety*.

Of Hammond's versification I shall only observe, that though it may want that nerveless softness which often accompanies less animated compositions, yet his language is distinguishably emphatic, empas-
sioned, and sonorous; strongly expressive of his
imme-

* *Laudari a laudato viro—to be praised by the praise-worthy*, has ever been considered as the highest species of commendation. In his essay on elegy, after mentioning the advantages it derives from heroic metre with alternate rhyme, Shenstone pays a pleasing tribute of affection to the memory of Hammond. *The world*, says he, *has an admirable example of its beauty, in a collection of Elegies not long since published; the product of a gentleman of the most exact taste, and whose untimely death merits all the tears that elegy can shed.*

immediate feelings, and even, where occasion requires it, sublime.

It is an humiliating reflection, that elevation of sentiment should not always be proportionate to intellectual attainment: but whoever casts even the most transient glance upon the volume of mankind, will perceive how rarely they are connected. How frequently is it, that the mind, though richly endowed by nature, and enlightened by laborious application, yet wanting fortitude to withstand the littlenesses of prejudice, permits the passions to dictate to opinion? In early life this dominion is almost proverbial; nor is it less observable in advanced years, especially among the candidates for literary fame. Seldom is it that a rival's success, even at a period when all competition is at an end, can be contemplated with complacency:

— *Hæret. lateri lethalis arundo.*

And yet jealousy, though a source of error as fertile as it is malignant, is not the only fountain from
whence

whence a perverted judgement may be derived. The decisions of the understanding are equally influenced by vanity and pride: by vanity—ostentatious of superior penetration; by pride—haughtily demanding applause and admiration, by affected singularity and disdainful opposition to the general opinions of mankind.

How far the decisions against which I have ventured to militate, may originate from causes similar to these that have been enumerated, it would be rashness to pronounce: and whether there be any thing in the life, the character, or connexions of Hammond, that may have contributed, in the estimation of some, to draw a veil over the beauties of his poetry, is a question, I presume not to determine. Of Hammond little more is known, than that he was the friend and associate of Pitt, of Lyttelton, and of West; and it may, perhaps, thence be inferred that he was also (what cannot *now* surely be thought an unpardonable crime) a zealous assertor of the constitutional liberties of his country.

I am

I am sensible that to oppose the sentiments of a critic whose abilities must be revered so long as learning shall be respected, is an attempt that will not, it is to be feared, escape the imputation of presumptuous rashness. Let it, however, be considered, in extenuation of the freedom with which the critic's opinions have been canvassed, that no man is infallible; that the wisest are not free from prejudice, and that the most virtuous are exposed to error: circumstances which are little suspected, occurrences which are rarely attended to, may warp their judgement, or bribe their partiality; and it is seldom, therefore, that either praise or censure, applause or condemnation, take not some tincture either from affection or dislike, from prejudice or vanity.

The Rambler has a passage so applicable to these observations, that I shall make no apology for concluding with it.

“ Some seem always to read with the microscope of criticism, and employ their whole atten-

" tion upon minute elegance, or faults scarcely
 " visible to common observation. The dissonance
 " of a syllable, the recurrence of the same sound,
 " the repetition of a particle, the smallest deviation
 " from propriety, the slightest defect in construction
 " or arrangement, swell before their eyes into enor-
 " mities. As they discern with great exactness,
 " they comprehend but a narrow compass, and
 " know nothing of the justness of the design, the
 " general spirit of the performance, the artifice of
 " connection, or the harmony of the parts; they
 " never consider how small a proportion that which
 " they are busy in contemplating bears to the
 " whole, or how the petty inaccuracies with which
 " they are offended, are absorbed and lost in gene-
 " ral excellence.

" Others are furnished by criticism with a te-
 " lescope. They see with great clearness whatever
 " is too remote to be discovered by the rest of man-
 " kind, but are totally blind to all that lies imme-
 " diately before them. They discover in every pas-
 " sage

“ sage, some secret meaning, some remote allusion,
 “ some artful allegory, or some occult imitation,
 “ which no other reader ever suspected ; but they
 “ have no perception of the cogency of arguments,
 “ the force of pathetic sentiments, the various co-
 “ lours of diction, or the flowery embellishments of
 “ fancy ; of all that engages the attention of others,
 “ they are totally insensible, while they pry into
 “ worlds of conjecture, and amuse themselves with
 “ phantoms in the clouds.

“ In criticism, as in every other art, we fail some-
 “ times by our weakness, but more frequently by
 “ our fault. We are sometimes bewildered by igno-
 “ rance, and sometimes by prejudice ; but we
 “ seldom deviate ^{far} from the right, but when we de-
 “ liver ourselves up to the direction of vanity.

F I N I S.

“ Some secret meaning, some remote allusion,
“ Some ritual allegory, or some occult influence,
“ Which no other reader ever suspected; but the
“ Have no perception of the cogency of argument,
“ The force of pathetic sentiments, the various
“ Tones of diction, or the flowery embellishments
“ Finely; or all that engages the attention of others,
“ They are totally insensible, while they pry into
“ Worlds of conjecture, and amuse themselves with
“ Phantoms in the clouds.

“ In criticism, as in every other art, we fall
“ Times by our weakness, but more frequently
“ Our fault. We are sometimes bewildered by
“ Reason, and sometimes by prejudice;
“ Seldom deviate from the right, but when we do
“ Live ourselves up to the direction of vanity.

26:VI II

THE END